

# SLATE Update

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ST. LOUIS AGENCY ON TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT



Francis G.Slay, Mayor



Winter 2010-11 Issue

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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**By Michael K.**

**Holmes**—SLATE serves tens of thousands of individuals – dislocated workers, adults and youth – each year. Sometimes overlooked is the fact that we count hundreds of area businesses among our customers.



This issue of the *SLATE Update* focuses on the many ways we work with the members of the St. Louis business community.

Businesses, whether located in St. Louis City or hiring St. Louisans, truly are the lifeblood of the local employment landscape. They have a vested interest in a skilled, educated workforce – which is exactly what SLATE strives to provide. As the stories within make

clear, SLATE has formed valuable partnerships with both established business associations such as the RCGA, and with newcomers to the area such as Unisys Federal Systems.

Of course, these efforts rest on the hard work of our Business Development Department, which offers employers in our community an extensive set of valuable, no-cost

services. Every day, Bonnie Mireles and her team forge strategic relationships with the business community and help create new opportunities for both them and for jobseekers. I hope SLATE staff and partners walk away from this issue with a renewed appreciation of the vital part they play in our organizational success.

Sincerely,

### SLATE'S PARTNERSHIP WITH UNISYS HELPS BRING IT JOBS TO ST. LOUIS

In the summer of 2010, our community received welcome news: Unisys, a worldwide information technology company with 23,000 employees, announced its plans to create an Application Modernization Center of Excellence (AMCOE) in St. Louis City.

SLATE has been assisting Unisys in their efforts to create and fill 300 IT jobs locally by 2012. The new Center



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ST. LOUIS AGENCY ON TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT  
**SLATE**  
MISSOURI CAREER CENTER  
DOWNTOWN • CENTRAL WEST END

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of Excellence will serve as the core application development hub for Unisys Federal Systems, allowing the company to serve a wide variety of government

clients from a centralized location. While waiting for their new location to be readied, selected Unisys staff were temporarily housed at SLATE's Downtown location (City Hall West).

On November 18, 2010 Unisys held an Open House to celebrate the establishment of its new Application Modernization Center of Excellence on Washington Street. Guests, including SLATE staff, enjoyed hors d'oeuvres, beverages and a "cyber-wall" of information displays describing Unisys staff, services and clients. SLATE welcomes this important new addition to the St. Louis business community!



**Michael K. Holmes and Ted Davies,  
President of Unisys Federal Systems**

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**SLATE PRESENTS  
NEW PROFESSIONAL  
EVENT FOR UNISYS**

As part of our ongoing partnership, the SLATE Employment Transition Series (SETS) Team hosted a special presentation by Unisys senior staff on September 22, 2010. Held at the United Way building on North 11<sup>th</sup> Street, the session featured AMCOE Vice-President Kurt Gerstner, who gave a thorough review of Unisys, their current and pending projects, and his reasons for choosing St. Louis as their newest operations hub. Approximately 40 job seekers turned out to engage in an invaluable Q&A with Mr. Gerstner.

A special thanks goes to **Ken Riddick, Ray Gude, Cheryl Jones, Kelly Hubbard, Robert Petrich, Angie Siegler, James Donnelly, Gretchen Vandermulen, Antoinette Boyd and Denise Jackson** for helping to develop a strong relationship with Unisys and for pulling together this highly informative seminar.



**Unisys representatives network with SETS participants**

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## THE ST. LOUIS AREA MISSOURI EMPLOYER COMMITTEE (MEC) HELPS BUSINESSES TO GROW

Since 1986, Missouri Employer Committees (MECs) have served as vital partnerships between employers and the Missouri Division of Workforce Development (DWD). Local MECs consist of volunteer employer representatives who serve as advisors to identify and address local employment

challenges and offer educational seminars targeted to the needs of employers. To date, 32 MECs have been established across the state.

The St. Louis Area MEC, which serves both the City and the County, currently has three SLATE staff members as Committee Members: **Kelly Hubbard (Chair)**, **Donny Carroll**, and **Lynette White**. The Committee meets monthly and plans out a series of 2-3 educational seminars each year. At each seminar, expert speakers are invited to address topics of particular importance to the local business commu-

nity; a networking breakfast and a brief overview of the services available to businesses through Career Centers are also included.

The St. Louis Missouri Employer Committee is actively seeking additional employers to place a member on the Committee. The MEC is an excellent resource to



encourage tailored services from the DWD, create problem-solving networks and help keep abreast of changes in employment law.

There is no cost to join. If you are interested in becoming a member or would like more information on MEC, please contact **Kelly Hubbard** at [khubbard@stlworks.com](mailto:khubbard@stlworks.com).

## RCGA CONNECTS REGIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

In early 2008, the St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association (RCGA) launched a regional initiative, the BounceBack St. Louis Pro-



gram. BounceBack brings together people in business, education, professional associations and career centers through forums, talent groups, partnerships, social networks and a web

site. It acts as a hub of information that keeps employers, jobseekers, training providers and workforce development professionals connected. BounceBack St. Louis was originally formed to re-engage area Information Technology professionals who had been dislocated as a result of the recent recession. BounceBack has served over 1,000 displaced individuals since that time, many of whom have successfully transitioned into IT-related occupations. Increasingly, however, other occupational clusters are being targeted through the formation of BounceBack Talent Groups that meet monthly. Recent examples include special events for educational institutions, green jobs and the healthcare industry. Attendance typically ranges from 40 to well over 100 at each meeting.

Although administered by the St. Louis RCGA, the BounceBack program is principally funded by the Missouri Division of Workforce Development and the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County Workforce Investment Boards. SLATE's Business Development department regularly participates by providing information on Career Center services and facilitating the participation of potential employers.

SLATE is pleased to be a part of this important initiative that both helps dislocated jobseekers and makes St. Louis City a more attractive option for relocating businesses. More information can be found at [www.bouncebackstl.com](http://www.bouncebackstl.com).

### ST. LOUIS AREA MEC MEMBERS

Lynn Beauchaine	<i>Lynn Beauchaine &amp; Associates</i>
Donny Carroll	<i>SLATE CWE</i>
Nancy Doerer	<i>Amdocs, Inc.</i>
Kelly Hubbard	<i>SLATE Downtown</i>
Teresa Katubig	<i>Extra Help, Inc.</i>
Ashley Lang	<i>True Manufacturing</i>
Donna Mantle	<i>Missouri Career Center, Deer Creek</i>
Don Smith	<i>Missouri Career Center, Florissant</i>
Sheila Williams	<i>Missouri Career Center, St. Charles</i>
Lynette White	<i>SLATE Downtown</i>

## ***Congratulations and Thanks!!***

to the following SLATE staff:

### ***15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary***

**Loree Augustine** - in December, 2010

### ***10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary***

**Susan Fulton** - in November, 2010

### ***5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary***

**Phyllis Thomas** - in November, 2010

## **SLATE AND PARTNERS THINKING GREEN TOGETHER**

In late 2009, The Missouri Department of Economic Development (DED) received American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds as part of the State Labor Market Information (LMI) Improvement grant program. At the statewide level, the project involves MERIC, various state and local Workforce

Investment Boards and the Department of Natural Resources and will give training providers vital information on the skills job seekers need for sustainable careers in various green industries.

Locally, the Green LMI project is being led by the RCGA in cooperation with SLATE and several other WIBs in both Missouri and Illinois. SLATE Executive Director *Michael Holmes* has stated

"This is the first project where all

the Workforce Investment Board [in the region] have come together and collaborated". With the assistance of the Center for Business, Industry and Labor (CBIL) at St. Louis Community College, focus groups have been held with such industry sectors as building and construction, waste management, energy and agriculture to build a broader employer survey

being developed by the Center for Advanced Social Research at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

A Green Economy Symposium is scheduled for

January in order to present the project findings in conjunction with a Career Fair for green trainers and employers.

## **SLATE HELPS ST. LOUIS JOB SEEKERS WITH MATH**

On January 11, the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE) will offer a new course for adult learners: *Math, Math & More*

*Math!* Developed in close cooperation with St. Louis Public Schools Adult Education and Literacy (SLPS AEL) program, this new course of study will address the basic math skills gaps that prevent SLATE clients

from progressing on to attain their GED testing and find employment.

*Math, Math & More Math!* will consist of two six-week series. The first focuses on *Fractions, Decimals & Percents*, while the second will cover *Applied Math/Word Problems*. Each series will be divided into two parts, one at SLATE's Downtown location and the other at the SLPS Adult Learning Center on 5078 Kensington Avenue. Participants will undergo TABE testing and after performing all course activities will earn a Certificate of Completion.

The opportunity to learn or refresh basic math skills can create a foundation for success for many of our customers. A special thanks goes out to **Mary Ann Kramer** and **Rhonda Jones** of SLPS Adult Education & Literacy for helping to make this collaboration possible.





# The Many Faces of Training

## Part II

### at SLATE

The previous article discussed the many training programs offered to adults and dislocated workers at SLATE Missouri Career Center. The current article will focus on similar services SLATE provides to area businesses. With the struggling economy growing at the lowest rate in a decade, businesses across the nation are faced with difficult financial decisions. Missouri Governor Jay Nixon and City of St. Louis Mayor Francis G. Slay understand that one way to help ease the uncertainty and motivate businesses to hire is to provide them with a skilled and experienced workforce that meets the requirements of emerging high-tech, high-paying positions. With this in mind, the 43 Career Centers across the state and their partners provide a variety of skill-building training opportunities for eligible businesses. This article will focus on training available to businesses at SLATE Missouri Career Center; our training partners will be examined in the next issue.

SLATE's Business Development Team, led by Bonnie Mireles, is

dedicated to understanding the needs of St. Louis businesses and offers its expertise on current business trends and hiring practices at no cost. The Business Development Team has access to a comprehensive bank of local talent and effectively matches job openings with candidates that have the appropriate skills. In the Next Generation Career Center (NGCC) model, the Business Development Team is integrated with the Skills & Jobs Team, economic developers and educational institutions. One of the most valuable programs that provides employers with a skilled workforce is the U.S. Department of Labor's On-the-Job training (OJT). Through this program, companies are reimbursed up to 50% of the wages paid to new employees (up to 90% in Missouri). OJT is cost-effective since it takes place at the business, with no need for extra equipment or travel. Supervisors at the business willingly participate, and feedback on OJT is immediate, factors that accelerate the growth of needed skills. Bonnie reports that a total of

38 job seekers have been placed into OJT by the Business Development Team since March of 2010.

Of course, there are challenges associated with OJT. Some companies have difficulties incorporating it into a busy schedule. The person responsible for directing and evaluating the training has to be sure that his or her other job responsibilities are being met. The facilitator must also be familiar with the equipment relevant to the training course. To overcome these potential disadvantages, the DWD's OJT Training Practices and Procedures Manual recommends a structured approach to OJT, consisting of four main components: Roadmap, Lesson Guides, Job Performance Measures, and Supporting Documentation. Full details can be found on WorkSmart.

In addition to the national OJT program, the state of Missouri recently rolled out its own program, Work Ready Missouri, that provides businesses with no-cost training opportunities. The new program has matched 1,000 participants with employers for up to six weeks of intensive, workplace training.

## EXPECT SUCCESS!

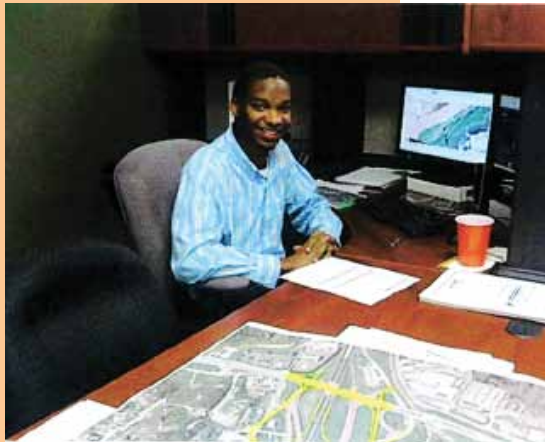
### SLATE'S INTERN DEMONSTRATES EXCEPTIONAL WORK ETHIC, ATTITUDE AND SKILLS

**EFK ♦ Moen, LLC**, a local Civil Engineering Design Firm, hired Felix Cooley for a summer internship through SLATE. They were so impressed and pleased by Felix's performance that they wrote a letter of recommendation, the text of which is reprinted below.

**"Felix Cooley completed an 8-week summer internship at EFK ♦ Moen's St. Louis office. EFK ♦ Moen is a Civil Engineer Design Consulting firm whose clients include MoDOT, IDOT, St. Louis County, St. Charles County, Jefferson County, many municipalities in the St. Louis Region, and private/commercial developers.**

**Felix worked in AutoCAD and MicroStation software, drafting traffic control plan sheets, creating roadway geometric drawings and revising site plan drawings. He checked quantity totals and edited construction cost estimates for several roadway projects using Microsoft Excel. He was introduced to office printers, plotters and scanners and shared the office with 9 Civil and Structural Engineers, 4 Roadway and Site Designers, and a Survey Staff with 2 Professional Land Surveyors and 2 Field Crews.**

**Felix was early to work, eager to learn and interacted well with our staff."**



**Felix Cooley at work  
in the EFK ♦ Moen, LLC office**

Any Missourian currently receiving unemployment insurance is eligible to participate and work 24 hours a week while continuing to receive unemployment benefits. They are also eligible for a \$300 stipend to cover training-related expenses. **There is absolutely no cost to employers.** Upon completion of the program, participants receive a training certificate and may be offered full-time position by their employer. Governor

J. Nixon called Work Ready Missouri, a joint collaboration between the Missouri Department of Economic Development and the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, a "win-win for unemployed workers and Missouri businesses." Local job seekers and business

interested in the Work Ready Missouri program should contact **Pete Peterson**, SLATE Business Development Team. Pete was instrumental in hiring Marla Roach through Work Ready Missouri – her Success Story can be found on page 7.

Finally, SLATE also offers Classroom Occupational Skill Training (COST), a short-term, accelerated credentialed training program offered to adult and dislocated workers through community colleges

and other training providers. COST training is delivered in two categories - Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)/Trade Readjustment Assistance (TRA) and Workforce Investment Act (WIA). TAA/TRA assists workers who become totally or partially unemployed as a result of increased imports or movement of business operations to a foreign country, while WIA helps adult and dislocated workers.

Workers who are about to be laid off are introduced to this program and a variety of other services through SLATE's Rapid Response Manager, **James Sahaida**. Over the last two years, Rapid Response worked with 11 companies and reached out to more than a thousand people. "Rapid Response is the first point of contact for the dislocated workers with the Missouri Career Centers. It's very important time in marketing the MCC's services," said Mr. Sahaida.

Just as businesses have to continually innovate to remain viable and competitive, the workforce system also seeks out opportunities to respond to market conditions and revise its product offerings. Missouri's Next Generation Career Center initiative has implemented a system-wide redesign of service delivery. The critical help provided by our educational and community-based partners will be examined in the third part of *The Many Faces of Training at SLATE*.

## SLATE STAFF & PARTNERS

### MARLA USED HER SKILLS TO TRANSITION SLATE TO NGCC

**Marla Roach** joined the SLATE Missouri Career Center's Skills & Jobs Team as a Work Ready Missouri program trainee in October 2010. During her 6 weeks with SLATE, she was able to reassess her skills and interests, gain networking experience and advice on transitioning to a new job, and develop a comprehensive job search strategy. She was an immense help to SLATE's staff as they learned about and implemented recent additions to the NGCC Products and Services toolbox.

Before her time at SLATE, Marla experienced a diverse and accomplished career. For ten years, she served as a television manager for Charter Communications' public access channel, helping to provide free community-based programming to St. Louisans. In the decade prior to her work in television, she worked for the St. Louis Public Schools as a 6th grade math teacher.

At the request of **Stacey Fowler**, manager of the Skills & Jobs Team, Marla analyzed and compared some of the new online self-guided training and job search resources offered by the state of Missouri, including the Alchemy, Missouri Connections and O\*NET websites. Marla said that while all these online assessments are great, each fills a specific niche. For

example, Missouri Connections can benefit job seekers who can comprehend the information by reading and are computer literate; Alchemy has a video component built into it and is best suited to those who respond to visual input; O\*NET, with its comprehensive research capabilities, is a great resource for dislocated and transitioning professionals.

Experience at SLATE taught Marla to be flexible: "To get a job on TV I would have to relocate," says Roach, "Instead, I adjusted my focus and looked for jobs I have skills for." Marla knew she was organized and liked to work with people. She also had a talent for presenting and disseminating information to others, so she began to look at careers in corporate training. As a result of the Work Ready Missouri program and her experience at SLATE, Marla received a realistic preview of job responsibilities in this field, and was able to hone the leadership skills she developed as a TV manager.





## SLATE SNAPSHOTS



**1. Halloween Party.** Svetlana Bostick, Ken Riddick and Kelly Hubbard enjoy SLATE's Halloween Chili Cook-Off and Costume Contest.



**2. Inspirational Speaker.** Clyde McQueen, Director of Kansas City's Full Employment Council (FEC) Missouri Career Center, talks to the St. Louis WIB.

**3. State Parks Youth Corps Recognition.** Alice Prince visits Governor's mansion at Jefferson City and attends an honorary dinner for those who worked to make SPYC a success. Pictured are (left to right): First Lady Georganne Nixon, Alice Prince, Scott Joplin House's representative Almetta Jordan, program participant Keith Simms, Governor Jay Nixon.



**4. Unisys.** Glyniss Davis, Unisys Corporate HR Representative (center), Stacey Fowler and Ken Riddick at the Unisys Open House.



**5. Warm Welcome.** St. Louis WIB Secretary Sherry Vogel resumes her duties after an extended absence.

